📄 Full Survivor Statement of Jessie Matheny

Subject: Trafficking, Chemical Assault, Cult Abuse, Disability Neglect, and Systemic Failure (2015–2025)
Prepared July 2025
By: Jessie Matheny

Introduction

My name is Jessie Matheny. I am a disabled survivor of sexual and labor trafficking, chemical assault, emotional exploitation, cult abuse, and repeated systemic abandonment. I've experienced trafficking, rape, starvation, gaslighting, spiritual manipulation, and threats to my life — all while disabled and denied support by the very systems that are supposed to protect people like me. What follows is the full, unfiltered account of what has happened to me — not simplified, not edited down — because I need people to understand just how deep and layered this has been.

⚠️ Abuse Timeline & Key Events

2015 – Intimate Partner Violence and Community Exile

In 2015, I was physically abused by my then-husband, Aaron Coles. After escaping him, I told people in the spiritual/psytrance music community — the only community I had — about what had happened. When I disclosed that abuse and began trying to raise funds through a GoFundMe for holistic cancer treatment, I was exiled and canceled by the community in 2017. That exile destroyed my reputation, isolated me from every support I had, and left me vulnerable to future exploitation. This cancellation would haunt me for the next decade.

2016–2017 – First Trafficking Situation (Connor Faherty)

In April 2016, I dated Connor Faherty. We broke up in October 2016, but he refused to leave me alone. He kidnapped and held me hostage for 11 months — from late 2016 into 2017 — in my own home. During this time:

He drugged my food and water regularly, causing vomiting, convulsions, and rapid weight loss.

I dropped to 70 pounds and was extremely ill — I'd previously seen a holistic doctor who believed I might have cancer.

He raped me repeatedly while I was ill and incapacitated.

He refused to let me access medical care, kept me isolated, and physically deteriorating.

This was the beginning of my trafficking experience, and it happened while I was already disabled, abandoned by my community, and fighting for my life.

2018–2021 – Exploitation in Oregon

Between 2018 and 2021, I passed through four short-term living situations in Oregon, all of which involved emotional or physical labor exploitation. I was repeatedly promised safety or rest, and instead pressured to perform:

Housekeeping,

Emotional caretaking,

Labor I was not physically able to sustain.

Some of these landlords or hosts evicted me during the COVID-19 moratorium, even though that was illegal. These actions displaced me and forced me to live in hotels during the summer and fall of 2021, using what little money I had to survive, while continuing to be denied access to medical care or benefits.

November 2021 – Trafficking by Robert Milligan

While I was staying in a hotel in Oregon, Robert Milligan flew in from Arizona and showed up at my hotel uninvited. I had no money, no safety net, and no one who could come get me. He pressured me to come with him to Arizona, promising to help me retrieve my belongings and get me back to California where I could access my Medicaid and rebuild.

He refused to let me bring all my belongings, claiming we'd come back for them. We never did. I never got my things or my housing back. Once in Arizona, I became completely dependent on him for shelter, transportation, survival — and he used that to begin coercively trafficking and exploiting me.

2021–2024 – Arizona: Ongoing Trafficking, Rape, and Medical Neglect

For over two years, from late 2021 through early 2024, Robert Milligan trafficked me while I lived in his home in Arizona. During that time, he:

Coerced me for sex repeatedly,

Raped me once in early 2024 while I was severely ill and asleep,

Forced me to perform unpaid housekeeping and emotional labor,

Used me to lure other women — including sex workers — into his home under false pretenses,

Mocked me, insulted me, and kept me in a state of constant emotional duress,

Controlled access to food, water, transportation, and safety.

I was denied access to medical care, despite having a functional disability (including dysautonomia and cardiac issues). I warned him and others multiple times that I could not live in group housing or shelters, because I cannot function without a private, quiet, safe environment.

October 2023 – Attempt to Leave and Severe Heart Event

In October 2023, I told Robert I needed to leave but couldn't move during winter due to my disability. I had just begun selling art online and people were offering me money and possible contracts. It was the first glimmer of hope. He agreed to let me stay until at least May.

Soon after, I suffered a major heart event that left me unable to move or get out of bed. I told him again that I could not survive winter exposure or instability, and he reaffirmed that I could stay until spring.

But then, he got sick and contaminated everything in the house, despite knowing my immune system was compromised. I contracted pneumonia for nearly two months, and during that time:

He refused to get me food or water,

I nearly died from dehydration and starvation,

I was only saved when someone finally brought me supplies, after possibly 2 weeks without essentials.

January 2024 – Rape While Ill

While I was still severely ill, weak, and bedridden, Robert raped me while I was asleep. I was too ill to resist, and too sick to escape. That rape was the culmination of years of coercion and abuse.

February 2024 – Coerced Eviction with APS Involvement

Shortly after recovering — in late January or early February — Robert delivered a typed eviction notice alongside a social worker. That notice:

Was not a legally binding eviction,

Was presented as if it were official,

Was accompanied by the false claim that no extensions were available, even though legal extensions were possible.

I told the social worker — multiple times — that I could not live in a shelter due to my disability. I explained that I could not sleep without a quiet, private room, and that exposure would lead to another life-threatening illness. She ignored all of that. She failed to investigate. She sided with my trafficker. She manipulated my legal options and abandoned me.

PART 2A — February to May 2024: Exploited and Abandoned in Lucerne Valley

After escaping the trafficking situation in Arizona in early 2024, I had nowhere to go. I was still sick, traumatized, and recovering from pneumonia, cardiac distress, and starvation. I was in a deeply vulnerable state — physically, emotionally, and financially. A friend came to pick me up and brought me to the only place available: the home of Julie Amigliore, the elderly mother of my close friend Jason, who had died by suicide. Julie had been coercing me to come live with her for some time, presenting it as a sanctuary where I could rest, heal, and recover. She assured me that I wouldn't have to pay rent, wouldn't be expected to cook or clean, and could simply focus on getting back on my feet.

That turned out to be false.

As soon as I arrived at Julie's house in Lucerne Valley, California, it became clear that she expected far more than she had promised. I was immediately put under pressure to pay all the household bills, buy all the groceries, cook meals, and clean the home — all while still extremely weak and disabled. I still didn't have access to transportation or medical care. Julie refused to take me to the doctor or even to the store. Once again, I was denied access to the bare minimum survival needs, just as I had been in Arizona.

This was a different form of trafficking — one that relied on false promises, manipulation, and guilt. Julie used emotional coercion, drawing on her relationship to my deceased friend, and layered it with pressure about her own needs as an elder. She positioned herself as someone I "owed," while making herself the victim — claiming that I was the burden and that I was lucky to have shelter at all. She withheld care, food, and transportation while demanding full emotional and domestic labor from me, and then used my disability and poverty against me to justify her growing hostility.

Eventually, that hostility turned into violence.

At one point, Julie physically attacked me — beating me severely. I was already weakened from months of medical trauma, and the assault left me with visible injuries. I feared for my life. But instead of facing any consequences, Julie went to the court and filed a restraining order against me, claiming elder abuse. The court granted it instantly, without asking for my side of the story. I wasn't given a chance to speak, explain, or even be heard.

The police came to her home and forcibly removed me, treating me like a criminal even though I was the victim. They gave me no time to gather my things. I was forced to leave behind all of my belongings — including my cat — and was literally dumped on the side of the road in the high desert of Lucerne Valley, with no food, no water, no money, no transportation, and no shelter. I was now not only homeless, but also criminalized, with a restraining order on record based on a complete lie. This was state-enabled abuse — the system acted immediately and without

question on behalf of the abuser and once again failed to see or protect the disabled survivor in front of them.

PART 2B — May 2024: Picked Up by Griffin O’Shea and Exploited Again

After being violently removed from Julie Amigliore’s home and left on the side of the road in Lucerne Valley, I was in complete shock. I had just survived multiple medical emergencies, a rape, an exploitative eviction, and now a false restraining order followed by desert abandonment. I was physically weak, extremely dehydrated, emotionally devastated, and still had nowhere to go.

That’s when Griffin O’Shea, someone I had known previously through the psychedelic trance music community, contacted me. He offered to come pick me up. At the time, I believed he was trying to help me. I thought he cared. Griffin had told me over the phone that if I could just get to Nevada City, he would help me find a place to live — that he already had a plan for housing lined up for me. I took him at his word, because I was desperate and had no other options. He drove out to Lucerne Valley and rescued me from the desert.

But almost immediately, things started to feel off.

Griffin took me back to his house — where I found out he had another woman in his bed, and yet another one on the couch. There were multiple women living there or coming and going, all of them apparently sleeping with him, none of them being supported, and all of them, like me, appearing vulnerable in some way. I had been under the impression that Griffin was interested in dating me or being a real friend — someone trustworthy and safe — but that illusion was shattered as soon as I stepped into his home.

Instead of helping me find stable housing like he promised, Griffin expected me to:

Cook for the household,

Clean up after everyone,

Give massages,

Care for his roommate’s child,

Provide emotional labor constantly — while still being medically unwell, homeless, and traumatized.

He became cold and judgmental when I didn't perform the way he expected me to — as if I wasn’t submissive or "oppressed" enough to be worthy of help. I realized quickly that he was operating a kind of harem environment, using spiritual language and community connections as

cover for exploiting vulnerable women for labor, attention, and intimacy. He withdrew the housing offer entirely, leaving me stranded once again.

At that point, I was devastated, but I still believed I might be able to maintain some connection with Griffin if I played along. I didn't yet realize that this was another high-control, cult-adjacent dynamic, and that Griffin was more interested in maintaining power than actually helping me. It was only after I escaped that I saw the full pattern — and how dangerous it really was.

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PART 2C — June 2024: Psytrance Party, Drugging, and Confirmation of Cult Abuse

In June 2024, shortly after the events with Griffin O'Shea, I was invited to a party in Pioneer, California, hosted by Shaul Saidi (Griffin's friend) and members of the psychedelic trance music community — a community I had once been deeply connected to but had been exiled from years earlier.

I didn't go because I trusted these people. I went because I had become desperate to reconnect with community in any form. I thought maybe — after five years — the dust might have settled. Maybe I could explain my side of things. Maybe there was some path to amends, or even just tolerance. What I found instead confirmed every fear I'd ever had about what this scene had become.

At the party, I was drugged with LSD in a drink that was passed around without warning or disclosure. It was very hot out, I was dehydrated, and I drank it thinking it was water or juice. I had no idea it was dosed until it was already affecting me. I was suddenly tripping without consent, surrounded by people I didn't trust, in an unsafe environment.

The party itself was steeped in coercion and what appeared to be criminal activity. I witnessed or strongly suspected:

Drug trafficking and distribution of psychedelics,

Prostitution and coercive sexual behavior,

Possible illegal marriages or ceremonial pairings with unclear legal implications,

And exploitation of undocumented immigrants, who appeared to be working under manipulation or pressure.

The environment was cloaked in spiritual rhetoric — “tribal healing,” “divine feminine,” “sacred sharing” — but underneath was control, silence, and harm. It became unmistakably clear to me that this scene is not just a failing community — it is a cult, with all the tactics of control, exile, and abuse that cults use.

After the event, things escalated quickly:

Multiple people came to me and told me that members of the community — including Griffin O’Shea — had begun talking about me, spreading smears and false narratives behind my back.

Then Eileen Lewis-Cromata, a prominent DJ, made a public post targeting me.

People then came onto my social media page and attacked me directly, and the few friends I still had stopped speaking to me afterward.

This wasn’t vague or unprovable. It was witnessed, documented, and very real. It was the resumption of a public smear campaign, just like what happened to me in 2017 — only now it was happening again, right when I was already destabilized and trying to survive.

After that, it became nearly impossible to engage online:

My posts were shadowbanned or received almost no engagement,

New connections dried up,

And it began to feel like I was being digitally tracked, flagged, or suppressed, making it difficult to work, share my art, or reach out for help.

This campaign of harassment, exile, and reputation destruction has been ongoing since I first tried to speak out about abuse. The psychedelic trance scene is not safe — not just socially, but spiritually, physically, and economically. It silences survivors by cutting off their ability to live.

PART 2D — July to August 2024: Drug-Facilitated Assault, Continued Trafficking, and Attempted Murder

After the Pioneer party and the wave of renewed online harassment, I was still trying to find a way forward. I remained in touch with Griffin O’Shea, despite how strained and painful things had become. Part of me still held on to the hope that I could explain myself, that someone from the community might see what was happening to me. That maybe, if I kept showing up — kept surviving — someone would finally recognize the truth.

Instead, things got worse.

Coerced Travel and Sleep Deprivation

Griffin encouraged me to go to a Native American gathering in Northern California, hosted by his best friend, Shaul Saidi. He made it seem like it was a spiritual opportunity — and also hinted that it might be a way to reconnect with him. I didn't have other safe options, and I wanted to believe there might be healing in it. So I agreed.

But once I got there, Shaul refused to bring me back. He kept me out for three days straight, during which I had to stay awake — I wasn't offered a safe place to rest or recover. This forced sleep deprivation took a serious toll on my physical and neurological condition, which was already fragile. I became extremely disoriented, physically weak, and emotionally destabilized.

Eventually, Shaul took me back to his home — but instead of rest, safety, or support, he drugged me.

Drug-Facilitated Assault with MDMA

At Shaul's house, he invited me to participate in what he called a Shabbat wine ritual. I agreed, assuming it was simply a cultural tradition involving wine. But what he gave me had been spiked with MDMA, which he did not disclose. I had not knowingly taken a drug, nor did I consent to being dosed.

I began experiencing intense effects very quickly. My heart raced. I lost control over my physical responses. I felt confused, euphoric, panicked, and disassociated — all at once. This wasn't a spiritual ceremony. It was chemical coercion.

I later confirmed that what I experienced was a drug-facilitated assault — not sexual in nature, but still profoundly violating. I could have died. My cardiac condition makes stimulant exposure dangerous, and he had no concern for my health or consent. There was no spiritual justification for this. It was control.

I barely survived that night. Once the effects wore off enough for me to move and think again, I escaped and returned to the Buddhist monastery, where I had been staying previously — still weak, still financially depleted, and still being coerced into labor.

Return to the Monastery and Escalation of Danger

The monastery property — in Boulder Creek, California — was being overseen by Ashley Semien, a man who claimed to have cancer and had been exploiting my labor while the monks were away. I had been brought into the situation by Andy Dupree, a man who had been coercing me to move to Boulder Creek for years and was the only one with access to transportation.

When I returned, the exploitation continued:

I was expected to do all the caretaking work — cooking, cleaning, property maintenance — with no payment and no access to medical care.

I was told repeatedly that I would be reimbursed for food and supplies, but the reimbursement never came.

I spent my entire remaining income and food stamps on food, toilet paper, propane, batteries, and other essentials that Ashley and Andy used — without compensation.

I was again stuck, dependent on people who held all the resources — and who refused to take me to the store or to a doctor, just as had happened in previous exploitative situations.

Discovery of Criminal Activity and Attempted Murder

It was during this time that I uncovered something much darker. I discovered that:

Ashley Semien was a cocaine addict, actively using and involved in drug activity,

He had ties to a cartel operating in the Santa Cruz area, and

He was attempting to fraudulently acquire the monastery property by manipulating the property owner — a vulnerable, non-English-speaking man — into signing over legal documents.

When I confronted the situation or even showed signs of realizing what was going on, Ashley became violent. His behavior escalated sharply. He became paranoid, erratic, and threatening. And then he tried to kill me.

I won’t go into every detail here — not yet — but the attempt on my life was real. It was not metaphorical. He intended to silence me. I escaped again, terrified and traumatized, and I tried once more to turn to the authorities.

Systemic Neglect from Law Enforcement

I went to the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office, hoping to report the attempted murder and criminal activity. But once again, I was not taken seriously.

Officers told me that Ashley Semien was an informant — and because of that, my case was shuffled around, delayed, and mismanaged. I was never given protection. No evidence was collected. Nobody has followed up with me meaningfully since.

Despite clear signs of:

Human trafficking,

Drug-facilitated assault,

Attempted murder,

Financial exploitation,

Disability-related harm,

And cartel-related crime —

I was left completely unprotected. This is not just a failure of policing. This is a systemic abandonment of someone who had already been repeatedly targeted, hurt, and erased.

PART 2E — September 2024 to Present: Aftermath, Ongoing Harm, and the Fight for Safety

After escaping the attempted murder at the monastery, I entered what I hoped would be the first stable chapter in years — but even outside of direct trafficking, the damage and danger haven't stopped. I'm still not safe, and I'm still not being helped. I'm writing this because I'm still trying to survive, and I want someone — anyone — to see what has really happened to me.

Temporary Safety, Lingering Exploitation

I'm currently in a housing situation that is non-trafficking, meaning I am not being explicitly coerced or assaulted. But that does not mean my needs are being met, nor that I am safe. I am living with the aftereffects of:

Multiple rapes,

Chronic physical illness exacerbated by prolonged medical neglect,

Serious psychological trauma from near-death situations,

Financial devastation,

And total systemic abandonment.

Even now, I am:

Unable to access adequate healthcare, especially neurological, immunological, and cardiac care,

Still vulnerable to retraumatization, due to instability and lack of private space,

Medically unsafe in shared living situations, due to a congenital skull condition (including a partially open fontanelle and cranial plate instability),

And constantly at risk of being displaced again, because I do not yet have permanent housing.

I'm surviving, but just barely. And survival isn't the same as healing.

Psychological Fallout and Continued Isolation

There is no word strong enough for the level of exhaustion I feel.

I was not only trafficked multiple times — I was systematically erased by every institution I tried to report to. I was exploited by people who pretended to be healers, spiritual leaders, or friends. I was denied medical access by people who knew I needed care. I was fed false hope, then discarded. I was physically assaulted, starved, drugged, gaslit, and abandoned — again and again.

Now, when I try to explain what happened, I'm still dismissed. People assume I'm paranoid or unstable. But I remember everything. I have the receipts, the screenshots, the scars, and the memories. I am not delusional — I'm just the product of long-term, compounded harm.

Because of what happened online after the party in Pioneer and the posts made by people in the psytrance cult, I've been:

Socially isolated, unable to reconnect with former friends or build new community,

Digitally suppressed, with my online presence algorithmically limited and monitored,

And repeatedly shut out from spiritual or artist spaces, where I once found meaning and survival.

This isn't just trauma. This is erasure — and it's working. I can feel the world closing in.

What I Need — and Why I'm Still Speaking Up

I need help. But not just help — real, informed, trauma-aware action. And I'm telling the full story now because if I don't, the truth might disappear entirely.

Here is what I'm still trying to secure:

Permanent, private, medically safe housing, free from group living or exploitation,

Legal representation to pursue civil or criminal accountability for trafficking, rape, and assault — including under AB 2777, which gives me until 2026 to file for what happened in 2016–2017,

Assistance retrieving official records from Adult Protective Services (APS), the social worker involved in the Arizona eviction, and law enforcement agencies that failed to collect evidence,

Support addressing false legal actions, including the restraining order filed by Julie Amigliore, which was based on false accusations and has contributed to my ongoing housing barriers,

Medical advocacy and disability support, so I can begin to get care for my real, life-altering conditions,

Digital safety and cult recovery support, to begin untangling the social and spiritual abuse that continues to impact me online and in person.

I'm not writing this because I think someone will magically fix it. I'm writing this because it has to be documented, and because someone needs to understand what systemic abandonment really looks like. It's this.

I Am Jessie Matheny — and This Is My Story

My name is Jessie Matheny. I am a survivor of trafficking, sexual violence, chemical assault, labor exploitation, spiritual abuse, digital persecution, false criminalization, and extreme systemic neglect.

And I am still here.

I'm not writing this for pity. I'm writing this for action — so that what happened to me cannot be erased, denied, or ignored.

I'm ready to pursue justice and protection — legally, medically, and socially. But I can't do that alone anymore.

Please hear me.

🎨 Add-On: Loss of Livelihood and Artistic Identity

Before I was trafficked and exiled, I had a thriving creative life. I was a successful artist — not just emotionally, but professionally. I owned and ran a handmade jewelry business called handmadehemjewelry.com with over 8,500 sales on Etsy. My work was well-known, and it gave me a sense of purpose, dignity, and survival.

But I lost that business.

I lost it because:

Connor Faherty, the man who began trafficking me in 2016, would not allow me to work.

Every coercive housing situation after that made it impossible to sustain the business.

My hands and body, after years of abuse, trauma, starvation, and labor exploitation, physically can no longer create jewelry or physical art. The pain, nerve damage, and illness have stolen that from me.

And Robert Milligan, who trafficked me in Arizona, refused to take me back to California to retrieve my belongings — including my supplies, tools, and inventory.

Now, all I have left of that life is my old website, my empty Etsy store, and the memory of what I built. I haven't been able to run that store in over five years. But I still show it sometimes — because it's the only remaining proof I have that I was once a real, functioning person. That I had something of my own. That I wasn't always like this — crying and broken and begging systems to believe me.

Since losing the ability to make physical art, I've been trying to pivot to online creative work — writing, digital art, and social science study — but I've been shut down at every turn. The exile from my former community destroyed my network and visibility. The repeated trauma has eroded my stamina. And without safe housing, medical stability, or support, I haven't been able to rebuild.

I'm currently taking classes in humanitarian social science, trying to build a future from the ashes of what I survived. But I need support — and I need people to understand that trafficking doesn't just take your body. It takes your life's work, your creative spark, and your right to build anything that lasts.

That's why I'm telling this story.

🌱 Final Section: The Future I'm Fighting For — Founding Ascent Phoenix

My name is Jessie Matheny, and I am not just trying to survive — I am trying to rebuild something bigger than myself. If I can recover, I want to begin a foundation called Ascent

Phoenix, where I can not only reclaim my life and health, but become a visible example of what is possible for others.

Ascent Phoenix is about more than me. It's about:

Neurodivergent people who have been silenced, isolated, and abandoned.

Trafficking survivors with complex disabilities.

Artists and creators who were destroyed by abuse, exile, or systemic failure.

People like me — capable, intelligent, motivated — who simply need a stable chance to recover on our own terms.

I'm currently developing creative technologies that help neurodivergent people express themselves and make art — tools that helped me regain the ability to write and explain my trauma. Without those tools, I would never have been able to tell this story at all. I want to bring those innovations to others, because I know how healing they can be.

The truth is, the U.S. government spends $100,000 to $200,000 every five years just to keep a chronically homeless, chronically ill person barely surviving — often in conditions that never allow recovery. For that same amount of money, I could:

Completely recover my health, housing, and creative career,

Begin piloting a model of trauma-informed, neurodivergent-centered rehabilitation,

And help others do the same.

Right now, I am so sick that if I do not get safe, isolated housing and consistent care, I likely have only a few months to a couple of years left to live. My dysautonomia, my cranial plate instability, and my cardiac symptoms have worsened beyond what I can manage in a shared or unstable environment. My survival depends on total peace, a fully accessible space, and care without constant exposure to people or unpredictability.

But I don’t just want to survive. I want to prove something. I want to show that people like me — people with rare neurological disorders, functional disabilities, and extraordinary creative skill — can recover, thrive, and give back when the systems that usually discard us finally step aside or offer support that fits.

This is my final chance. If I don’t make it, I want this story and this vision to outlive me. I have spent years studying humanitarian social science, despite everything I’ve survived, because I

believe that we are failing to recognize the power and value of the most neglected people in society.

Ascent Phoenix is my answer.

If I'm allowed to rise from this, I will bring others with me.

📄 Final Add-On: Social Isolation, Courage, and the Vision for Ascent Phoenix

Throughout this entire process, I've lost every friend I once had. I don't have any living family. I don't have a safety net, a partner, a parent, a sibling, or even a consistent support person. I was exiled from the only community I ever knew, and the abuse I endured severed every remaining connection.

People often expect survivors to show up with proof of a support system — but people like me don't have one. That's part of the damage. There's no one left.

So I'm starting at square one, with nothing and nobody. But I'm still trying. And I want that to be understood: when survivors speak, they often speak alone — not because they're not telling the truth, but because the truth cost them everyone.

The only thing I have left is courage, and a voice, and the ability to articulate what happened to me. I don't have a large following. I don't have a platform or a team. I'm one disabled, neurodivergent survivor who still believes that telling the truth matters — and who believes that if no community will take me in, then I will build one.

That's what Ascent Phoenix is.

It's not just a project for my own healing. It's a vision to build a space where people who've been erased, exploited, or exiled — especially neurodivergent and disabled artists, survivors, and thinkers — can be seen, supported, and protected. I want to create technologies and creative tools that make it easier for neurodivergent people to express themselves and tell their stories, especially people who, like me, often go unheard by traditional systems.

This kind of exploitation happens in artist communities far too often. And it's invisible, because the people it happens to are often isolated, houseless, disabled, or nonconforming. But it has to stop. And I'm not asking anyone to fix it for me. I'm working to build a foundation that helps fix it for others, too.

I am Ascent Phoenix.
And if I'm given the chance, I will rise — and bring others with me.